

# Guðmundur Thoroddsen

## Earth to Earth

February 21 - March 30, 2019



**Asya Geisberg Gallery** is pleased to present "Earth to Earth", a solo exhibition by Icelandic artist Guðmundur Thoroddsen. This will be the artist's fourth exhibition at the gallery. Still situated in a muted color palette paying homage to his homeland, "Earth to Earth", continues Thoroddsen's exploration of masculinity, and more extensively, the painted surface. Through ceramics and painting, Thoroddsen eradicates his previous population of males that flagrantly pissed, farted and romped through institutions, coliseums and scenes of domesticity, in favor of a more plaintive arena for abstraction. In doing so, the artist heroically erodes his *idée fixe* - the notion of Maleness - and strips it down to its wretched bare bones. Thoroddsen performs a cleansing, an extinction of his subjects and their bravado and offers an apology by means of woeful barely-there figuration. What remains is a lugubrious cartoon, maleness disappearing into mere suggestion, and anthropomorphism, a Goofy-the-dog pastiche embodying the decaying male form.

Similarly, Thoroddsen's new ceramics seem prone and susceptible when compared with the humorous mock-trophies that dominated previous shows. Here, more symbolic and transcendental pieces such as "Boxing Glove" and "Cigarette Butt" interrupt the abstraction. These recognizable artifacts inherit the gloomy suspense of the painted surface, allowing "Earth to Earth" to bridge abstraction and figuration. "Pink Hat", the only clear depiction of male dominance in the entire show, feels uneasy, like an unwelcome guest.

In "Earth to Earth", Thoroddsen hones in rather than pans out, urging the viewer to confront and navigate the many obfuscated forms. In the painting "Entrance", a smoking dog is beheaded by the horizon, whilst in "Prankster," a head betwixt chuckling and screaming looms alone in a room reminiscent of Francis Bacon's "Study of Pope X", its fair-weather brushwork deliquesces its visceral humanity. A dilapidated head metamorphoses into a ground of archways and hints of landscape in "Ruins". Teeth recede into the painted surface and plumes of smoke provide pools for pause amidst popping eyeballs, shadows, and voids. Thoroddsen's figures are mourning their previous incarnations, their pleasure and freedom eradicated. They now exist, motionless, without anatomy in oppressive murky infrastructures. Like Francis Bacon, Thoroddsen's vestigial framing traps the subjects in isolation or impromptu colloquy. The titular "Three Friends" segue back and forth in and out of graceful abstraction yet Thoroddsen toes the line between the real and the supposed, implying consciousness but denying us the *joie de vivre*. Whereas before our joy was in their bad behavior, now our pleasure is suspended with theirs, inviting us to reexamine how we could have been happy to spectate in the patriarchal revelry for so long.

--Holly Jarrett

*After studies in Iceland, Holland, Berlin, and Granada, Guðmundur Thoroddsen completed his MFA at the School of Visual Arts, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include The Hafnarborg Museum; The Reykjavik Art Museum; Harbinger Gallerí, Reykjavik; Hverfisgallerí, Reykjavik; and Tysgalleri, Reykjavik. Group exhibitions include Bredgade Kunsthandel, Copenhagen; The Akureyri Art Museum; The Knockdown Center, New York; Quartair, The Hague; Ausstellungsraum, Basel; Reykjavik Art Museum; DODGE Gallery, New York; Kling and Bang Gallery, Reykjavik; and Danziger Gallery, Berlin. Press includes The New York Times, Hyperallergic, Art F City, Whitehot Magazine, Elephant, New York Magazine, Art Observed, The Icelandic Times, and Twin Magazine, and his work appears in the 2011 publication "Icelandic Art History from late 19th Century to Early 21st Century". Thoroddsen participated in the Fountainhead Residency, Miami, FL, and is the recipient of multiple artist grants from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Iceland. He was a finalist for the ArtPrize Top 2D Award in 2012.*

Thank you to the Icelandic Art Center for their support.



*Entrance*, 2019  
Oil on linen  
47.25 h x 47.25 w in



*Sunhat*, 2018  
Glazed earthenware  
54 h x 34 w x 2 d in